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The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

MARCH 1992

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WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS...



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Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.

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MARCH 1992

EDITOR
REV. DASS BABU
MEGH DEEP APARTMENTS
MAYURI MARG
BEGUMPET
HYDERABAD-500 016. (A.P.) Phone : 847436

HON. BUSINESS MANAGER
PROF. GEORGE KOSHY, *General Secretary*
Synod Secretariat
POST BOX NO. 4906, CATHEDRAL ROAD, MADRAS-600 086
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25 Years Ago!

The Rev. Samuel Sadhu explained the value of Hy and Lyrics and the way to use them in the service of Ministry. The Rev. Sadhu spoke on the 'Sacramen and delivered a '*Kalakshepam*' (Lyrical address) on subject 'Ministry' and the Sing-Song Service arran by St. Andrew's church was another interesting item the programme.

—S. RATN

Mysore, Churchman 19

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CULTURAL DIMENSION



It has always been difficult for man to realise that life is all an art. At the beginning the primitive philosopher whose business was to account for the origin of things usually came to the conclusion that the whole universe was a work of art, created by some Supreme Artist. In the Book of Genesis we read how the whole cosmos was fashioned out of nothing by the artistic hands of Jehova. Man, out of all God's handiwork, is the only creature on earth who can put communication in the form of symbols. The earliest cave paintings of all civilisations bear testimony to man's urge for a meaningful and artistic expression. There is hardly a civilisation or culture where the awareness of human movement as a vehicle of expression of joy and of sorrow is not evident.

Communicating the Gospel in any native culture is no easy task—it is an adventure. Content for the artform needs to be moulded in such a way that a complete fidelity to the full authority of the Word of God and keen sensitivity to the insights of the art should be combined. In other words, theological wisdom and scientific knowledge should be mastered.

A movement is developing for employing the artforms such as Bharata natyam, Kuchipudi dance, Kathak, etc. to communicate the Gospel. In fact, the idea of making use of the artforms is not a new thing. The early missionaries realised the valuable contribution of this effective intercultural communication and without any hesitation they switched on to it. As a result of their hard work and ceaseless efforts some of the best literary works, lyrics and songs were produced and the artforms like Ballads, Kalakshepams, Yokshaganams, Kolattams etc. were encouraged. It was the Church that had revived the original cultural expressions of this land which were rooted in the history of the people. It may not be out of place to remember the literary giants like De Nobili, Basci (Veeramamuni), Caldwel, C.P. Brown, Ellis, Max Muller who even edited the greatest epics of this country and brought them out to be universally accepted literature. Today when we speak about the artforms we are only rediscovering them in our Church.

Among all the arts, dance is the most primitive and the sophisticated artform. Perhaps before man began to speak, he began to dance. From the beginning dancing is intimately associated with religion. One of the earliest known Christian rituals, the Hymn of Jesus, assigned to the second century, was nothing but a sacred dance. Eusebius, the third century historian in his recording often refers to the dance in connection with the Christian worship. Quite interestingly some believe (Ellis) 'Choir' originally meant an enclosed space for dancing. Chrysostum who referred to the sacred dance around the Holy Table at Antioch, only objected to drunken excess in connection with it. The custom itself he evidently regarded as traditional and right (Dance of Life). The very idea of dancing had a sacred and mystic meaning to the early Christians who had meditated profoundly on the text. In the Bible, dance has been given a due importance. David dancing before the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25, 6, 5-ff), Jeremiah's vision of joy linked with the dance (Jer. 31,31) and a few references in the Book of Psalms assert that dance was a regular form of ritual and worship.

India with its staggering multiplicity of races, linguistic and ethnic groups, religious and social orders, has an incomparable richness of music and dance. Devadasis or the 'sacred dancing girls' of temples used to perform dance. They were both religious and professional dancers. They were married to gods and their dances represent the life of gods as well as the emotions of love they experience for them. The dancers also used to dance in the rich people's homes and used to live with them. Thus they came to be known as the 'temple prostitutes'—although originally it was not their business. This stigm a was wrongly attributed to the artform and henceforth dance became a taboo and if church has developed any aversion it was because of this stigma. However the aesthetic sense which

manifests itself in day-to-day life has been present from the earliest times. Even today this artform helps us to communicate the Gospel effectively and this cultural dimension needs to be considered seriously. The recognition of the importance of the bonds between culture and religious education seems to be one of the most important facts in the recent years. Certain attempts aimed at giving an increasing importance to the cultural dimension not only to the preaching of the Gospel but also to the developmental activites are seen. These initiatives are still limited an fragmentary but tend to integrate culture into econom and social progress. Whether this dimension is for t development, it has been knocking again and again at t closed doors of our hearts and if this is employed succes fully and thoughtfully, content-wise, it will be a treme dously rewarding endeavour.

—DASS BAB

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY

PREMA SAGARAM

What is in a name? A lot!

Prema Sagaram, an ocean of love, is the name of our Moderator who has just retired. Jesudhasan, servant of Jesus, is the name of our former Moderator; Devapriam, the beloved of God, is the name of our present Moderator, Dharma Raj, the king who keeps dharma (righteousness) is the name of our Deputy Moderator! These are only a few of the beautiful and meaningful names of our people and leaders. Indian Christian names are not just names, they are Indian Christian theological categories!

It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the CSI is blessed not only with leaders with a theological vision, but also with theologically meaningful names.

Names in the Bible are not just words to identify a place or person.

Bethel is, the house of God, where the presence of God was experienced; Penial is the place where God was encountered face to face. Jehovah-Jireh is the place where God was known as 'the one who provides'—one who provides what is to be offered to God Himself, thus putting an end to the practice of human sacrifice. So in Tamil, Thirumarayoor is the place where the mystery of God is studied and Arasaradi is where Jesus is enthroned as King.

Abraham means, the father of nations; Israel means, the one who wrestled with God and won; Samuel means, asked of the Lord. Many names in the Bible carry a story from the pilgrimage of God's people. Names are not just names, names are personalities. The first Christian in south Travancore, the first fruit of the Gospel by the London Mission Society, is one Vedamanickam Maharajan of the dalith community, 'Gem of the Vedas', who, therefore, has royalty!

Sorry for the digression! What I really want to say in this reflection is what the former Moderator meant to many of us. This is not a farewell speech so eulogising his ministry—as theological teacher and administrator; O. T. scholar and passionate expositor of the word of God; President of the Senate of Serampore and innovator in theological education; General Secretary of the Synod, Bishop and Moderator, a dreamer of VELCOM and a tough bargainer with the CSI Related Missions Committee for the quantum of priority grants—is not appropriate here.

So I want to say in two words, what he was and continu to be to me—Prema Sagaram! His friendship is like ocean; His love of God is like a ocean; He preache that the love of God is like a ocean. To many—th villagers of his diocese, the members of the Synod, an friends Overseas—he was a channel of that ocean of lov

'Wide wide as the ocean .... deep deep as the deepe sea, is my Saviour's love' is a chorus that we often sin There is something about God's love that our min cannot grasp, our reason can't comprehend. There an element of mystery and wonder above God's love- its unlimitedness and inclusiveness. St. Paul praye 'I kneel in prayer .... that you may be strong to gras with all God's people, what is the breadth and leng and height and depth of love of Christ, and to know i though it is beyond knowledge' (Eph. 3:14 ff). M friend Victor Premasagar and I often pray this praye For we believe not only in the vastness of God's ocea of love; It is also our conviction that 'A theologian one who prays; and that one who prays is a theologian

Victor and I both love singing. The favourite Telu song that I learnt from him has these words: '*Samast manava sramanubhavamunu—Sahinchi, vahinchi—Premi chagala nee Samaanulevaru prabhu, nee samaanuleva prabho.*'

The editor of this magazine has summarised the addr of the Most Rev. Dr. Victor Premasagar at the last Syn as follows: 'God's redeeming love in Christ, acti in solidarity with those who suffer and struggle for justi and human dignity, sharing the earth's resource, beari witness to the Gospel through renewed congregations mission'. The priority of God's love, and Go preferential love for the poor, are well known elements Premasagar's theology.

'Premasagaram' is not just the name of a perso friend, and a great leader; It expresses in a Dravidi language an Indian understanding of God who show us the nature and extent of His love, on the Cross, on t mount of Calvary.

SAM AMIRTHAM,
Bishop.

Go Into All the World (Mark 16:5)

PROFESSOR DR. MILAN, OPOCENSKY, *Geneva* *

Today I wish to concentrate on the first few words of he theme: GO INTO ALL THE WORLD. We have eard the calling. We have been invited to follow in he footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth. We have been given great gift of Christian faith. We did not deserve it—did ot merit it—it is a sheer grace, something that happens y surprise and against all expectation. We call ourselves hristians. This term is related to the name of Jesus hrist. We ask ourselves: What does it mean to be a hristian today? It does not mean primarily to accept book of doctrines—although it may be important to be ell-versed and educated in Christian teaching. Jesus ays: Come and follow me. Go into all the world. Who elieves in Jesus Christ is on the move. Our faith means ction, movement. We need a time for meditation and piritual concentration. However, in the Gospel there s a strong emphasis on doing, moving, following and nitiating. The parable about the Samaritan has its ulmination in Jesus' saying: Go and do likewise (Luke 0:37). The verbs of movement play an important ole in the Bible. They witness to the dynamic core of he Gospel. We are sent to witness, to act, to work and o change. Even when we gather around the Lord's Table o celebrate the Eucharist strengthened by the bread and y the wine we are not allowed to dwell in the isolation f a cultic place but we are sent out to go into the world nd to serve wherever our service is needed.

Go into all the world is a *missionary* call. We are called o go and to witness to Jesus Christ, to his Kingdom. He vants to reign over our hearts and over our life in human ommunities. He reigns over the whole creation. God vith his work of selection is an opposite of the world. God stands vis-a-vis the world. God sends his gifts nd his messengers to the world—his light, the prophet, is Son—Christ. But also sin and death are in the world. The New Testament teaches us that God is in contradiction o the world. But God acts in order to liberate and to ave the world. In the biblical sense the world (Kosmos) s the sphere which is alienated from God and which is dominated by sin—it is the sphere of all that humans hink, plan and want. From the beginning of Christian ommunities, there was a tendency to stay apart from the vorld and to avoid the world. The monastic idea is a vitness to this drive: to stay apart and to avoid all the lust and dirt of this world. And certainly monastic ommunities have their important and relevant place in he life of Christian fellowship. It is a special gift (charisma) ut it would be strange if all Christians would take the ame dirction. We are called to go into all the world to reach and to become co-workers in God's liberating and econciling work. In Christ God was reconciling the vorld to himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). The message of reconciliation has been entrusted to us. Our task is to take the torch and to carry it, and to witness to Jesus Christ, to his reconciling power and love. We should not be afraid of demonic forces which seem to prevail in the world. We can go into the world with the strong belief that Jesus Christ has conquered the world (John 16:33). Christ disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them—he led them in a public procession as prisoners of war used to be led in ancient times (Co. 2:15). We should not fool ourselves—the fight and skirmishes with the evil forces go on. But in the light of Resurrection we can look at the world more hopefully and positively. We should not be worried about going into the world and working in this world. In New Testament times the inhabited world (oikuoumene) was basically the Mediterranean basin. Nowadays, 'all the world' (o kosmos hapas) is much larger. Our mission has no limits—we are sent to the most distant edges of this planet. We should witness to peoples of all races, cultures, religions and ideologies. The world has an ambiguous character; it is a creation of God and at the same time, the space of followers and listeners. In spite of it we can accept the world as the place and sphere of our life and work and of our mssionary activity—without the feeling of supremacy and superiority, positively, hopefully, humbly. We should not boast—we can approach the world in the spirit of repentance and service. We all are debtors and unfaithful servants. Some people are ready to draw a very thick line between the church and the world. Others have erected a huge wall by which they want to separate the church from the world—to keep it unspoiled and untouched. And yet, we should know that when we go to the pulpit or to the Lord's table the world accompanies us—we remain a part of the world. Christians are not neo-platonic philosophers who underestimated and despised the material world. In Jesus Christ God himself has entered the world—he entered the history and he calls us to accompany him and to become his co-workers. Go into all the world and proclaim the good news.....

What does it mean concretely? I wish to draw on another text which can clarify what I mean by a concrete, everyday witness. 'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice....Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.....' (Romans 12:1-2). To bring sacrifices is a practice current in the world religions. Also the Bible knows this practice. It brings us closer to the cult and cultic ceremonies. But with the Apostle it is a different matter. It is simple and very profane. It is not a question of an elaborate ritual which is performed in the darkness of a special cultic locality. The apostolic word about the living sacrifice challenges our entire being, our existence in its relation to the people and to the outside world. Our entire everyday existence should be presented and sacrificed to God again and again. Here the wall was removed

* This is the first of Four Bible Studies conducted during the Synod meetings by the Prof. Dr. Milan Opocensky, the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Geneva.

and destroyed which has divided our life between the sacred and the profane (secular). We are called to witness that God reigns over the entire life. The entire Christian life should be one whole sacrifice which is presented to God. It is a paradox—something very surprising and unexpected. In a cultic language something is said that is a devastating critique of the cult.

I am not speaking entirely against the rites and cultic elements in our churches. However, it is justified only if our worship and the sacraments are not cut off from everyday life. What we do and undertake in our churches and congregations (parishes) should prepare us for our witness in the world—it should arm us and strengthen us for our ongoing struggles. It is a promise and encouragement that we can go into the world without fear and in the spirit of commitment. The boundaries between the world and the church are transparent. What we strive for and what we do in the church has a consequence for the whole world. In our faith we do not drive anything that is private and that should be hidden in the ghettos of our parishes and in the dark corners of our church buildings. God claims this sinful and estranged world—God longs for this world and we are privileged to witness to this fact. Concerning the faith what is fitting—is not a rite which is automatically effective. What really matters is the living sacrifice, our living relationship to people and to our surroundings. The apostolic word calls us to come out of our self-imposed limitations and go into the streets and the market places of this world. To bring the holy sacrifice means to be open for God's presence and to preach about this presence of love in the midst of the world and to witness to this presence of God's continuing struggle for humans and the entire world.

To present your bodies as a living sacifice...which is your spiritual worship. It is rather a reasonable worship—the Apostle uses the term LOGIKOS , which has a philosophical background. God gives us his Word and empowers us by the Holy Spirit for the service. In this new type of a reasonable, logical worship—very different from the current cultic practice—the whole life is integrated into the service. Also our physical existence—our body and mind—are all part of the service. Therefore no dualism or spiritualisation is possible. It is in the secular and profane sphere—in our relationships, in our confusing and complex history that we experience what really matters. In the usage of the Apostle the term LATREIA—worship means the struggle and service of our everyday human existence. Each of us has to translate this word into his/her personal life. Also this church—the Church of South India—has to ask the soul-searching question of what this reasonable worship means in its life. This is certainly the purpose of this Synod. May it be given to us in our different places that we may discern what the will of God is.

Let me give an example from the situation in which I have lived most of my adult life. In Central and Eastern Europe we have experienced a socialist system which has now crumbled and disintegrated. In place of the former Soviet Union a host of independent states has emerged. As church we have lived in that situation and have tried to be faithful. Some people rejected the new situation a priori. Others made an effort to accompany the new society under construction in critical solidarity. Were we totally wrong in assessing what God's will was. The question can be raised whether Christians should not have spoken in a clearer, more energetic and demanding way. We had a group of dissidents in the church but we did not support them at all or not enough. We did not say anything or did very little in the sphere of the legal syste
We did not have a position on the question of electio
We were silent on the intimidation by the State Securi
We did not feel competent to speak on the issue
economics. Can we learn from those failures and sho
comings ? In spite of all shortsightedness, we Christia
cannot and should not be triumphalistic over the defe
of socialism. The key question really is whether th
system which seems to be behind us met in Christians
church which let itself be reformed through Christ. Now
days we stand on the ruins of systems and ideologi
which dominated our world for decades. Our hea
have been searched and our minds have been challenge
The paramount question is whether we are ready to he
people around us to get out of their alienation and
come to their basic rights.

In every situation, within every ideological or religio
ferment a Christian community should be a place
wholeness, of liberation and joy, where everybody ca
feel accepted and at home. Under all circumstances
need to watch out, to analyse our respective situation a
to look for those who find themselves at the margin
society, who are defenseless and vulnerable. A Christi
community is a healing community which speaks in t
name of victims. We are responsible also for our childr
and for the coming generations. It is our responsibili
whether or not our world will remain a human a
inhabitable place. If we indulge in some inward-lookin
self-centred ecclesiocentric trip, if we are more concern
about our internal church problems and issues and forg
the pain and agony of the outside world, then we shall
salt without taste and a caricature of a Christian churc

A Christian existence which takes concrete contempora
history seriously responds to the claim of God who clai
this entire world. This certainly does not mean to
conformed to this world. We have to be transformed a
the basis of this transformation is the renewal of min
Our thinking should take a new direction—have a ne
shape. The overall term for this total transformation a
renewal is repentance. May we be given the gift
repentance ! I am not talking about hazy, irration
moods and feelings. Let us watch the vocabulary of t
Apostle ; it is very sober and rational. Our worshi
our daily service should be reasonable and logical. Let
renew our minds. Let us cultivate the ability of critic
judgement, of critical distance and the ability to follo
what is adequate for our faith. The renewed mind is ab
to examine and to discern what is God's will. Let us ma
clear to everybody that we love this world which is Goo
world, but let us point to the reign and dominio
which has begun in Jesus Christ. God com
to us—he comes to his creation and he wants to use
in his service. At the same time, God is a great Disturb
who intervenes in our plans, questions our great desig
and makes clear that his will is not always identical wi
what we or the surrounding world consider worthy, goo
and useful.

God calls us to be the servants of the Gospel. T
Gospel is the power of God for salvation. It is the liber
ting power which we cannot keep for our private life
it has its public importance and decisive meaning. W
are called to the service which is ultimately releva
We are called to the existence which has a seal and a tou
of the ESCHATON—of the Ultimate—because life a
death are at stake and our salvation is in question. S
now is the acceptable time (2 Cor. 6 : 2) !

Justice, Peace and Ecological Concerns and the Mission of the Church*

REV. DR. KLAUS SCHAEFER,** *Secunderabad*

It is not out of the blue sky that we today in a Seminar on Mission and Evangelism also focus on the concerns for Justice, Peace and Ecology. In addressing these concerns and scrutinizing their theological relevance for the mission of the Church we join a process initiated by the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The JPIC process

The *Sixth Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver* 1983 called 'to engage member churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitmem (covenant) to justice, peace and the integrity of creation' (JPIC). The process emerging from this call has since then moved through various phases; discussion meetings and consultations have been conducted on regional, national and international levels to affirm the responsibility of the churches and Christian individuals in the earnest search for justice, peace and integrity of all creation. The *World Conference on Mission and Evangelism* in May 1989 in *San Antonio* (Texas/U.S.A.) also took up some of the issues of the 'conciliar process' and outlined the commitment of the churches in the 'Acts of Faithfulness'. A climax of the process then was reached in the *World Convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation* in *Seoul* in *March* 1990. When the convocation adjourned, the delegates had approved three basic texts and 'expressed their intention to carry back to their churches a commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation and to carry on a struggle against threats to life in these three areas.'[1]

The *Seoul declarations* resolved the following :—

(1) As a *basic direction* for Christian commitment to JPIC Seoul made *ten affirmations* on urgent issues where justice, peace and the integrity of creation are at stake ; these affirmations deal

1. with power as accountable to God ;
2. God's option for the poor ;
3. the equal value of all races and peoples ;
4. the creation of male and female in God's image ;
5. truth as the foundation of community ;
6. the peace of Jesus Christ ;
7. creation as beloved of God ;
8. the earth as the Lord's ;
9. dignity and commitment of the younger generation, and
10. human rights as given by God.

(2) An '*Act of Covenanting*' then identifies four areas as specific examples of 'faithful action' needed to heal 'the brokenness and violation of life and the division of our communities'. The delegates committed themselves in a covenant to work for (a) a just economic order ; (b) demilitarization of international relations ; (c) preservation of the atmosphere from the threat of global warming, and (d) the eradication of racism and discrimination.

(3) In a *Message* the convocation speaks about its commitment and states as theological basis of such a commitment to the covenant of God : It is stated that 'now is the time to commit ourselves anew to God's covenant.., to encourage wider support of the churches for people's movements.., to consolidate all struggles for JPIC..' etc.

The outcome of the Seoul convocation may be open for different interpretations ; but it can surely not be maintained that the JPIC process came to its end though the mode of procedure may have to change in the future. In fact, as the magazine of the WCC, 'One World', reports, the Central committee of the WCC two weeks after Seoul 'reaffirmed the WCC's commitment to continue the JPIC process. It called for regional JPIC meetings and further cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church "on all levels", but did not specifically recommend a second JPIC world convocation.'[2]

The JPIC process as a Mission Concern—controversial stands

While initiating the JPIC process the Programme Guidelines Committee of the Vancouver Assembly stated that the 'foundation' of the emphasis on JPIC 'should be confessing Christ as the life of the world and Christian resistance to the demonic powers of death in racism, sexism, caste oppression, economic exploitation, militarism, violation of human rights, and the misuse of science and technology.'[3]

Though this clear direction towards 'confessing Christ as the life of the World' points certainly to an understanding of the JPIC process as a mission concern of the Church, the major responsibility for carrying out this process was assigned to Unit II Justice and Service—and not to Unit I—Faith and Witness. This step was, as Gerhard Linn suspects, 'more than a practical decision in favour of a necessary division of labour'.

It turned to be a strategic decision with the consequence that JPIC is seen by many just as another, may be highly important, programme of the WCC to promote social justice, whilst it was and is meant as an attempt to proclaim the gospel in our time faithfully and with clear relevance for the life of all.'[4]

* Paper presented at a Seminar on Mission and Evangelism. 30th November, 1990 ACTC, Hyderabad. Abridged.

** Rev. Dr. Klaus Schaefer is on the faculty of the Andhra Christian Theological College, Hyderabad.

Thus already the statement of the inaugurators of the JPIC process and the factual assignment to the institutional frame of Unit II reflects a different theological understanding of the JPIC process. In subsequent discussions the *question of a proper theological foundation and conceptualization of the conciliar process on JPIC* became a much debated one—not only within the member churches of the WCC, but especially between representatives of the ecumenical movement and Christians holding rather evangelicals' views and flocking in other circles. The question at stake in these discussions has not only been whether the commitment of the churches to the search for JPIC can be identified as a genuine part of the missionary obligation of the Church, but even more whether the missionary commission of the Church today can entirely be identified with the JPIC process.

As the conciliar process developed the *concerns for justice, peace and integrity of creation became*, on the one side, *increasingly related to the missionary task of the Church*; the JPIC process was understood as *the* vehicle and instrument for proclaiming the good news faithfully to the needs of the people and the world today.

Mission is first of all the mission of God as his participation in the sufferings and struggles of peoples who have been created in the image of God and made stewards of God's good creation; since the earth is the Lord's, mission of the Church today also means caring for and protecting of the creation. And in the 'Acts of Faithfulness' the Churches are called upon for a critical reflection of their traditional understanding of mission and to a renewal of their universal missionary obligation.

A strong emphasis on 'JPIC as a Mission Concern' is also found in a number of articles of Vol. 41 of the 'Ecumenical Review' (October 1989), meant as study material for the Seoul Convocation. The authors, especially Douglas John Hall and Gerhard Linn, strongly argued for identifying the commitment to the search for JPIC as the meaningful expression of what mission of the Church in today's world is supposed to be, and both of these authors seek to substantiate their views by a profound theological analysis.[5]

Towards a Comprehensive concept of Mission

I have reported on these different visions of mission in some length, for I find these controversial views also burdening the *Church in India*. While a mission theology in terms of the JPIC process finds its theological exposition in theological journals and its praxis in social action groups, the vast majority of the members of the mainline Churches still refine to evangelical views—not to speak of the growing stream of evangelical and charismatic fellowship groups who attract many of our devoted church members and separate themselves from the ecumenical movement.

In view of this reality of the Church in India it deems required to seek some clarification of our missionary obligation in India today. Of course, there are many issues in this controversial discussion which can not be taken up in this paper. I confine myself to addressing only one of the issues, a discussion of the relatedness of the situation of the world and the gospel of the Church. This aspect occurs to be an important one since many declarations from the JPIC process refer to the current world situation and find in the actual experience of injustice and conflicts and in the threat of global catastrophies, the call for the urgency of a common and committ action, whereas Evangelicals suspect that according to t WCC the world sets the agenda for the Church.

Inter-relatedness of situation and gospel as important iss in defining the missionary obligation of the Church

1. *Situation and Gospel: A correlative theology theology of encounter with the world and with God.*

To me it is clear that the suspicion the JPIC process too much oriented on the situation of the world or ev on the zeiteist is a misconception. Or to put it in anoth way: It is a misconception to assume that we in formulati and communication of the gospel can leave aside t situation of the specific section of mankind we a addressing.

All good theology and especially mission theology h been aware of the fact that situation and gospel are relate As examples for such awareness we may refer to 'Pa Tillich's method of correlation' or to M. M. Thom who maintains, in the words of T. M. Philips, th 'the message gains its communicative power at the cutti edge between the Gospel and humanity's quest express in the historical situation'.[6]

It should also be asked what 'Situation' actually mea in this context. In the JPIC process the Church wan to be with the people and participate in their sufferin and struggles and solidarize with their fight for liberatio the Church comes face to face with these people a shares their life, sees field workers being exploited a women being raped. And the Church wants to lea to be sensible to the groaning of the whole creation travail and its longing for Salvation as evident in stinki rivers and deserted forests etc., (cf. Rom. 8 : 19-22). A this is surely not a theoretical involvement in the analys of a situation, at least not at the first place, but reveals possionate awareness of the actual self-experience of t whole creation—and is this not in accordance with G and his mission who is a passionately loving God?

It is eventually not necessarily true that the involveme of Christians in the situation of peoples leads to an enti absorbation by this situation so that the situation th dominates and formulates the gospel. It is hoped a wished and also experienced that the encounter with t destinies and fates of peoples and of the earth leads to fresh encounter with God, to a re-reading of the bible a a shaping of faith-traditions. It is therefore not surprisi that the orientation on the situation of people, as f example found in the Theology of Liberation of Lat America, leads to a renewed appreciation of the bible a a new hermeneutical concept of reading the bible. a many aspects, neglected in our theologising are bei re-discovered in the encounter with the struggles of t people and the world today as, for instance, in the theolo of creation[7] or in the Christology of Juergen Moltma who in his new book raises again the stimulating questi of D. Bonhoeffer 'Who is Jesus Christ for us—today in a situation characterized by global threats to justi peace and integrity of creation,[8]

2. *Gospel and situation :*

And yet, I want to add another strain of considerati which must seem to run cross to the first statement; b not necessarily so. The situation can not entirely defi the message and therefore it is true that the world can n

set the agenda for the Church—at least not in the deepest meaning of that statement—and the JPIC process as such can not entirely define the gospel and missionary obligation of the Church. The gospel always contains something which is exceeding the situation, what is not perceptible from the sight of human mankind and what sometimes even seems to be strange and alien to people—as the talk of sin, death, Christ-centredness of salvation etc.

To me it seems necessary that this aspect also is acknowledged in a good mission theology ; otherwise one falls into wrong conceptions about the task of the Church and misreads the biblical tradition as well as the human situation.

In this paper there is hardly a possibility of exploring this dimension of the gospel further, but an observation to the Church's role in coping with the situation of people in Europe may illustrate the intentions of my concern : The Churches in Europe accepted earlier their involvement in social and political concerns—though there were and still are lots of controversies,—and I think it is right and faithful to the gospel that the Church has done so. But interestingly is a most recent development : We observe a mighty religious and spiritual wave in Europe ; especially young people get interested in a religious quest and look for answers among occult movements, ancient tribal religions, Eastern ways of meditation etc. What is striking to me in this movement of New Religiosity and Esoteric is that the one institution which seemed from its spiritual tradition to be best equipped to respond to such a religious quest, that is the Church, appears to the vast majority of people as thoroughly incompetent for dealing with the spiritual thirst. To be sure it would not give a sufficient explanation to state that the Church got too one-sided in the past and neglected the spiritual dimensions in its missionary concern, but we should take care that the Church orients itself to the full gospel and the physical as well as spiritual situation of mankind.

In assuming these two apparently contradictory statements I wish to propose the commitment to a comprehensive concept of the mission of the Church. It is the ' fullness of the gospel ' (San Antonio Conference) what we owe to the people and to the wounded and afflicted world in which God is acting as the liberating and redeeming power.

3. *Not cheap promoting of the cause of the Church in new forms, but conversion of the Church*

In concluding the considerations on a reassessment of situation and gospel and as a transition to the concluding part of this paper I want to stress one other aspect occurring to me as of foremost importance. When we discover the JPIC process as genuine part of the missionary obligation of the Church, we are not talking about a new method of making the cause of the Church or of Christianity attractive to the people and the communication of the gospel more effective. Such a thinking in strategic terms with the wish to accommodate the Church to the needs of the people would entirely miss the deep dimensions evolved in the JPIC process. What is at stake is the authentic and honest response of the Church to the gospel in the current situation, what we search for in the JPIC process as a mission concern is a fresh encounter with the living God within our world and in this encounter a renewal and conversion of the Church.

A few remarks to such kind of conversion and to the shape of a renewed commitment of the Church in India along with some rather practical suggestions may conclude the paper :

The Church in India and the JBIC process

1. In its search for the ' fullness of the gospel ' in a fresh encounter with God in a world of injustice, conflict and threat of global self-destruction, the *Church must first of all clarify its self-understanding and its praxis.* What is the Church and what is Church supposed to be in India today ?

Such a self-critical reflection becomes very urgent if we look with sympathy and honesty at the performance of the Churches in India. The problem of the protestant main-line Churches in India seems not so much the lack of a clear concept of mission, but a tiresome and burdening involvement in ' domestic ' affairs which absorb too much of strength and energies. Mission in India occurs today to be carried on either by social action groups or by charismatic and evangelical groups ; both of these streams of Christianity are somehow doing well and serving needs of people[9], whereas the traditional missionary Churches seem almost to agonize.

To say this may be exaggerating and it may appear to be offensive, but on a junction where we are called to respond to the call of God in our times, we have to ask ourselves honestly about our way into the future : Does the Church want to be a communal force serving the needs of its flock alone or wants the Church be faithful to its call and represent the Jayangarde and the agent of a new and liberated mankind who has already experienced the liberating and caring power of the Holy Spirit and who is willing to share this experience with other people and with the wounded world ?

One provocative statement of Dietrich Bonhoeffer may remind us what Church is supposed to be :

> ' The Church is the Church only when it exists for others. To make a start, it should give away all its property to those in need. The clergy must live solely on the free-will offerings of their congregations, or possibly engage in some secular calling. The Church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others.'[10]

It may not be possible to exercise what Bonhoeffer urged a well-saturated German Church to be : but we must think into that direction.

2. In a new openness and willingness to respond to the call of God today the *Church in India must certainly join into the JPIC process and recognize the concerns of JPIC as authentic and genuine part of its mission.*

In doing so, the Church in India will have to set its own agenda for priorities and modes of procedures. The following seems to me to be worthy of further deliberations:

(*a*) The Church in India must identify areas of special concern and emphasis for this country and for its particular areas. In the commitment to JPIC there is provided a general option for the Church all around the world. Occasionally Christian representatives from the Southern half of the globe protest against the emphasis on ecological concerns as diversion from the struggles of the dependent countries in the South. This may be too short-sighed since the ecological crisis can be oberved world-wide but a study of the papers of Seoul may

lead to the conclusion that the options there not all and not necessarily relate urgently to the Indian or Asian situation, so that the Indian Church is called upon to respond to the JPIC process with setting its own emphasis. The Church in India has already identified one major area of concern in the struggle of the Dalits for justice and righteousness in the land. This involvement certainly needs to be strengthened but other problems also must be addressed. In regard of peace Christians will think probably first of all on peace within the country, opposing communal strivings and religious fanaticism, and then also on the development of good relationship to India's neighbours. In regard to ecological concerns the Church may in the first place take up what the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism in Section III explained on the just distribution of land on our earth—which is the Lord's, but also evolve itself in the protection of rivers, drinking water, forests etc.

(*b*) The Church in India must take care that the commitment to JPIC is carried out indeed as a *conciliar process*. This involves not only the participation of all the Churches, that is, denominations in India, but also a dialogue with people of other religious convictions and adherents to secular ideologies. On the level of motivation there may be differences, but in the carrying out of the JPIC process all can unite.

In order to facilitate this conciliar process the Churches must put up meetings on various congregational, denominational and ecumenical levels and ensure that as many Christians as possible come to share the vision of a renewed mission obligation of the Church.

(*c*) The Church in India as well as anywhere in the World needs *guidance* in order to carry on the JPIC process meaningfully and successfully. Such guidance can be provided by *ecumenical study projects*, but even more effectively by *re-structuring of the ministry* of the Church and the set up of *special ministries* with trained clergy and lay-people *in fields of JPIC concern.*

(*d*) The Church in India must give its recognized concern for JPIC certain *forms of commitment*. This can be achieved in different ways and on different levels :

— within the Churches themselves by setting up new forms of ministry as suggested under *c* :

— before God by liturgical acts with intercessions for affairs related to JPIC concerns and in new forms of worship ;

— towards and among people by concentrated and well planned actions and programmes related to JPIC ;

— towards governmental authorities by speaking for the speechless and acting as a prophetic Church

(*e*) Eventually the Church must *encourage more Christians to take up responsible positions in the secular society* and engage themselves as individuals in their worldly calling for the promotion of Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation.

What I was trying to do in this paper was to introduce to the JPIC process and to help us to discover JPIC concerns as part and parcel of our missionary obligation. May God help us to participate in his mission and carry on with his mission in the 'fullness of the gospel'.

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The Church : conciliar charismatic and confraternal

MICHAEL NAZIR-ALI

Deat Partner in Mission,

It is interesting to note that significant changes are taking place at this time in the life of both the Church of England and the wider ecumenical family. Some of those changes have to do with personalities, a new Archbishop of Canterbury for instance, but others have to do with the *structures* of the Churches.

CMS and the councils of the Church

In the Church of England, the so-called 'infrastructure review' has led to a number of changes in the various boards and councils of the Church. For us, the most important is the bifurcation of the Board of Mission and Unity into a Board of Mission and a Council for Christian Unity.

At first sight this seems to be a regrettable move, as it seems to obscure the historic and close connection between global and local mission, on the one hand, and the ecumenical movement on the other. We are being assured, however, that the change is taking place to enable mission to have a higher profile in the affairs of the Church. This can only be welcomed but we need also to continue to affirm that mission and unity *belong together* and that a desire for Christian unity often arises directly out of involvement in mission. Such a connection needs to be expressed structurally in the life of the Church.

Almost simultaneously with change in the domestic affairs of the Church, momentous changes have been taking place on the ecumenical scene. The new Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland was inaugurated last September. It differs from the old British Council of Churches in that the Roman Catholic Church and some of the black-led independent Churches are full members.

Some other Churches, however, which are members of the Evangelical Alliance, are still not members of the Council and it must be asked whether enough effort has been made to draw them into the family. Questions also remain about the concentration of power in the hands of hierarchies (through the Church Representatives' Meeting) and the comparative powerlessness of the Assembly. A good beginning has been made, nevertheless, and we welcome the new Council.

Along with the inauguration of the new Council, other changes have been taking place in the ecumenical structures in this country. For the first time, for example, there are national ecumenical instruments in all the four nations which constitute the United Kingdom.

Of special interest to us is the coming into being this April of the Churches' Commission on Mission. Once again, this is a much wider fellowship of those engaged in mission in the Churches than the Conference for World Mission which it seeks to replace. The new Commission, it should be noted, is the *Churches'* Commission and it will be Churches, rather than mission agencies as such, which will nominate the membership of the Commission and be responsible for contributing to its budget.

Institutional and charismatic

From the earliest times, the institutional aspect of the Church has always been complemented by the 'charismatic'. Anglicans, along with others, believe that the ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons is part of God's providence for the universal Church. In the early Church, this 'institutional' kind of ministry was complemented by a whole number of ministries having to do with the exercise of certain special gifts given to people in the Church. Thus there were prophets, healers, workers of miracles, speakers in various kinds of tongues *as well as* teachers, helpers and administrators (1 *Corinthians* 12. 27-31 of *Ephesians* 4.11).

A rigid distinction cannot be drawn, of course, between the 'institutional' and the 'charismatic' ministries in the early Church. There was a considerable overlap between one kind of ministry and another. Those in the ordained ministry could well have had some 'charismatic' gift as well. Indeed, they could have been recognised as suitable for the ordained ministry precisely because they exhibited a particular gift.

There is some evidence that, in the very early days, prophets exercised a kind of *episcope* (or oversight) over the ordained ministry of the local Church. The early Church also seems to have had ways of recognising *charismata* (or special gifts) in individuals. The ordained ministry, moreover, was not regarded as simply 'institutional'. Ordination was supposed to confer a divine gift to enable the exercise of such a ministry (2 *Timothy* 1.6). Despite these qualifications, it cannot be denied that there were distinct 'institutional' and 'charismatic' aspects to the life of the Church then as, indeed, there are today.

While we rejoice in the renewal of the *structures* of the Church, we are aware that the very spiritual renewal which has led to this is to be found in other significant dimensions of the Church's life as well. There is, for instance, renewal in worship, in communal and individual reading of Scripture and in ministries of care and nurture.

More and more Christians are discovering that the Holy Spirit has given them specific gifts for offering to God and for serving other human beings.

The 'Church' in CMS

It is not an accident that CMS is the **Church** Missionary Society. From the beginning there has been a consciousness that Society is a movement in the Church and needs to relate to the institutions of that Church. The renewal in the structures of the Church of England is leading to new expressions of this relationship. Partnership for World Mission, which brings together the General Synod and the mission agencies, is becoming a constituent Committee of the Board of Mission. Staff and members of CMS will, doubtless, be represented on other committees of this Board too (such as the Inter-Faith Consultative Group) as well as on the Board itself. Inevitably, there will be a presence in and a relationship with other boards and councils of the Church, including the various stages of synodical life in the Church of England.

At the same time, we need to continue to relate to the other Anglican Churches in these islands. It is good that relationships with the Church in Wales, the Church of Ireland and the Episcopal Church of Scotland are stronger than ever. CMS continues to relate to the central organs of consultation in the Anglican Communion, too. It does this by working closely with the Secretariat that services these organs and through support of specialist groups such as the Mission Issues Advisory Group and Mission Agencies Working Group.

In the ecumenical sphere, apart from continuing involvement through the Board of Mission in the Churches' Commission on Mission, we continue to be involved in the Assembly of the CCBI, in ecumenical inter-faith and community relations work, and in the work of Christian Aid. We also continue to relate to the Evangelical Missionary Alliance. We affirm all these relationships as being necessary for a movement that sees itself as an expression of the Church in mission. Naturally, there is financial component to all this involvement.

Charisma and call

We need, however, to affirm the energy and th commitment which is to be found among individuals groups and congregations where there has been a discover of vocation through the discovery of specific gifts whic God has given to individuals and communities. In othe words, we need to affirm the value of the 'charismatic' for mission. Renewal in the life of an individual or of community has *immediate* implications for mission These often need to be spelled out, however, and peopl need to be challenged.

A confraternity

Neither the affirmation of the 'charismatic', nor tha of the 'institutional', precludes critical engagement wit these constituencies. CMS will seek to bring greate awareness and commitment to mission in the Church b being challenged and by being challenging in our variou encounters with the Church in its many manifestations.

CMS, then, is a confraternity of people committed t the Church *and* to mission. In every part of the Church we should seek to raise awareness, foster vocation an bring about a commitment to the whole mission of th Church in every part of the world.

For its part the Church, in its different but inter-relate manifestations, needs to support confraternities such a CMS.

This support can be demonstrated by a willingness t listen to the witness of such confraternities, through fellowship and prayer and by giving time and money t their work. In this way they will truly be affirmed a *foci* for the whole Church's faithfulness to our part in th mission of God the Redeemer.

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The Concept of Watershed Management

MR. P. D. PADMA RAO (Secunderabad) *M.Sc., (Agl.)*

The concept of Watershed Management—'a holistic approach aimed at optimising the use of land, water and vegetation in an area, so as to provide an answer to alleviate drought, moderate floods, present soil erosion, improve water availability, and increase fuel, fodder and agriculture production on a sustained basis.'

The management is not confined just to agricultural lands alone but covers the entire catchment area starting from the highest point (ridge line) to the outlet of the nullah or natural stream. The involvement of congregation is utmost important to take up the ameliorative measures on barren hill slopes, marginal lands, privately owned agricultural lands and badly cut nullahs and river courses.

The nature and the scope of watershed management strategy, its chief causes and the remedial measures recommended are discussed in the following sub-heads.

The Nature and the Scope

Soil and water are the basic resources essential for survival of human kind on earth. Ironically speaking, very few people realise the importance of conserving and judiciously utilising the soil, the greatest gift of nature. According to Dr. H. H. Bennette, 'Soil without water is desert and water without soil is useless.' In fact, every kind of farm activity is connected with land, and prosperity of nation depends on the prospects of land resources.

Transformation of rocky earth's crust into the soil by weathering is a very long process. It is estimated that it takes anything from 400 to 1000 years for formation of just 2.5 cms of top soil. Left to nature, the soil is protected by natural vegetation. Under undisturbed conditions, geological erosion under natural conditions of abrading and 'aggrading' is well balanced, thus, a state of equilibrium is reached between climate, soil, rainfall, land slope and vegetal cover.

The chief Causes

Human interference either directly or indirectly plays an important role in upsetting the balance of nature, due to which the protective shield of land is disturbed and the land is torn into pieces by the erosion process-starting from splash erosion to formation of gullies and ravines. Man's ever-increasing needs resulted in felling of trees and removal of grasses. As a result, erosion problem has assumed threatening dimensions.

In India, it is estimated that 150 million hectares out of the total geographical area of 328 million hectares is subjected to serious soil and wind erosion, 69 million hectares is at critical stage of deterioration due to erosion, and 32 million hectares is prone to wind erosion. The area affected by gullies and ravines accounts for about 4 million hectares while the area effected by shifting cultivation is about 3 million hectares. There is 70 million hectares area under rainfed farming in the country (According to 'Field Manual on Watershed Management,' Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture, Hyderabad, India—1990)

Most of the arid and semi-arid regions of India have concentrations of eroded and degraded natural resources. Loss of vegetative cover followed by soil degradation through various forms of erosion has resulted in lands which are thirsty in terms of water as well as hungry in terms of soil nutrients. All these regions have predominantly livestock-centred farming systems, less biomass for animals not only reduced animal productivity but subsequent intense grazing pressures on already eroded lands further exacerbate the problem and deteriorate the ecological balance. Growing population pressure, higher demand for food and fodder coupled with impact of rapidly changing socio-economic conditions add fuel to the fire.

Remedial Measures Recommended

Soil and water conservation practices very rightly receive top priority for planning Watershed Management as they form the foundation for the sustainable agriculture. Water resource development stimulates all further developments in the watershed. All attempts to store effectively the rainfall in the soil profile, between the bunds and check dams, and in water storage reservoirs are made so that the rainfall is effectively utilised in the watershed. Subsequently, the crop improvement measures such as contour farming, timely implementation of all agricultural operations, adoption of improved varieties etc. are components of the integrated package of watershed management technology. And alternate land use systems involving forestry, pasture and agro-forestry, are also essential as they are surer means of stabilising both productivity of drylands and income of dryland farmers. All these measures together will naturally mitigate the severity of drought effects in the catchment and floods in the command areas besides reducing soil erosion and increasing groundwater recharge.

Watershed Management, thus, not only improves the productivity of lands which are at present producing very little but also is an investment in the nation's future. Above all it also controls soil erosion of highly degraded lands and leads to the stabilisation of the ecological balance of our environment.

In Jesus Christ—Towards A New Creation

Message from the NCCI Assembly held in Poona, 14-18, December, 1991

We, the delegates to the XXII Assembly of the National Council of Churches in India, meeting in Pune, 14-18 December, 1991, send our greetings to all churches and all people of this country. The NCCI is the primary ecumenical expression in India which provides fellowship and a forum for dialogue for the churches and Christian organisations in India. Its primary aim is to promote unity among all churches as a basic requirement for the life and work of the Church in India, and as an essential step for restoring the wholeness of the human community.

The theme of the Assembly has been 'In Jesus Christ—Towards a Renewed Creation'. We are living at a time when we ought to be more conscious than ever of the disharmony caused by human sin, not only in the relationship between people but also in the relationship of human beings with nature. We tried to understand the meaning of the theme through four sub-themes: seeking Human Oneness, Restoring Harmony in Creation, Building a Just Community and participating in suffering and Struggle. The Bible Studies that we had also tried to explicate these themes.

The ultimate aim of the ecumenical movement is the unity of all human beings. While this ultimate object remains still a dream it is the duty of all of us to seek human unity in the particular contexts in which we live and work. The quest for human unity derives its imperative from the reconciliation offered by Christ's suffering, sacrifice and resurrection and this is the theological basis for us to understand salvation today. Individual pietism should not be an end in itself, but a motivating and empowering factor in recognising and responding to the realities around us. We must remember that seeking human unity is possible only through the elimination of all that divides people.

Harmony in the creation can be restored only when we realise that God has created us as stewards and not owners of the rest of creation. Ruthless exploitation of nature should be stopped, and the atmosphere of the earth must be preserved for human habitation. Agapaic sharing should replace creed.

A renewed creation is not possible without striving to build a just and sharing community. We should not interpret Biblical passages to justify our tacit support to the oppressive and unjust systems and structures of society. The Church should participate in the struggles of the poor and the marginalised people for dignity and self-identity. The question of justice to Christians of Scheduled Castes Origin and to Dalits in general was one of our important concerns in our deliberations. This problem can be solved only by working together with other communities and by mobilising people for political action.

The Assembly discussed concepts of Development in the context of the discussion on economic justice. It is disheartening to note that in spite of all the development projects we have implemented since Independence, the problem of poverty remains unsolved. While we appreciate the efforts of the Government to solve the problems of the country through its new economic policy we believe that there are valid reasons to be anxious about the possible danger of succumbing to the dictates of the international economic institutions, and also about the possibility of increased misery in the immediate future. We are particularly concerned about the growing inflation, terrorism and the cult of violence.

Appeal to the Government of India and States

(i) To take up adequate steps to help Dalits without distinction of creed or colour, giving first priority in stopping atrocities against Dalits in all States, especially in Andhra Pradesh.

(ii) To accord to Christians of Scheduled Castes Origin the same constitutional privileges as are given to their Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist neighbours.

(iii) To exercise great restraint in building large dams entailing displacement of people, in the construction of nuclear energy plants which increase the potential of danger to environment and to life, and to take stronger measures for the conservation of forests and for protecting the rights of tribal people who depend on forests for livelihood and their cultures. We also request the Government to call for the views of individuals and organisations before signing the proposed Earth Charter.

(iv) To take strong measures to end violence against women in the country.

(v) To give special attention to primary education in the country which in many parts of the country, is in a deplorable condition.

Appeal to the Churches

(i) To equip the congregations to seek human oneness by evolving non-communal forms of fellowship, sharing their resources with other people, and by involving themselves in the struggles of people for justice;

(ii) To pay special attention to ministerial formation with a view to giving all Christian workers a new orientation about the missiological challenges of the time ;

(iii) To accept preserving the integrity of creation as part of the mission of the church and to educate the members of the church about the need to preserve the atmosphere of the earth for human habitation ;

(iv) To remove the obstacles and to facilitate the full and creative participation of women and youth in the life of the Church.



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Velcom and Education in Mission [CWM]

The EIM process within most of the member Churches of the South Asia region has not yet taken firm root. Apart from the Church of South India, the other three partner churches, namely: the Church of North India, the Presbyterian Church of North East India and the Church of Bangladesh, have not been able to move beyond the introductory phase of the CWM-EIM process.

However, this does not mean that these Churches are not engaged in the equipping of their members. Each Church has its own programme that is responding to what it perceives to be its mission priority.

It was the Church of South India that expressed the need for an EIM Workshop and invited the other partner Churches to share in the experience. This Wokshop was originally scheduled for the month of May but the tragic assassination of Rajiv Gandhi led to its being postponed to September.

The primary objective of the EIM gathering was to assess the development of the CSI VELCOM programme —Vision for Equipping Local Congregations in Mission. Of the 35 persons in attendance, 25 came from the 21 dioceses of the CSI and were the local VELCOM contact persons.

Expectations of the Participants

They expressed the hope that the Workshop would address the following concerns :

* What should the Church's mission strategy be in a multi-religious context ?
* What are the Biblical foundations of EIM ?
* How can the EIM process challenge existing Church structures that are not mission enabling ?
* How can the local Church be equipped to respond to the needs and concerns of its local community ?
* How can the EIM process influence the patterns of ministry in the Church ?
* How valid is the use of the term 'mission' in a multi-faith environment ?

Context Exploration

Causes for thanksgiving :

(1) VELCOM is making a strong impact on the local congregations, creating new consciousness and deepening concerns for issues affecting local people.

(2) Many congregations are experiencing growth.

(3) Increased emphasis of ecumenical sharing of resources in some dioceses.

(4) Greater awareness for mission outreach by local congregations.

Causes for Concern

1. In a number of states 'outcast' Dalits people are being hunted and murdered because of their Christian faith and affirmation of their human rights.
2. Increase in fundamentalism has led to the rights of Christians being denied in many states and Christian institutions being harassed.
3. Increased attacks on Churches have led to greater unity among Christians.
4. It seems as if the Christian Church is moving into a phase of persecution.
5. Those who are educated seem to be the ones betraying the Lord and the Church. It is the villagers, the uneducated ones, who are remaining firm and faithful.

The CSI VELCOM Experience

The process began in 1985 when the CSI responded to the Human Resources Development thrust of the Government. Their concern was that India would be a stronger nation but only a few of its people are enabled to contribute to its development. The challenge given was : 'what would be the result if all of its 800 million people were fully enabled to contribute their human potential ?'

The CSI established a committee to explore what the challenge meant for the mission of the Church. The exploration revealed the following :

(1) Agenda of Dioceses not related to concerns of local congregations and communities.

(2) Study of Diocesan Council and agenda items submitted to Synod also reveal that their concerns were not related to the concerns of local people.

The CSI Synod requested a further study of the issue. Different papers were submitted which led to an agreed common concern that emphasis should be given to enabling congregations to develop their own agenda issues. There was also concern that emphasis should be placed on the development of multi/pluri form leadership.

It was at this stage, in 1986, that the CWM-EIM thrust on equipping local congregations in mission helped to give a clearer focus to the programme. The result was the birth of VELCOM—Vision for Equipping Local Congregations in Mission. A resource document 'Moving Communities in Mission' has been produced. The Synod has adopted the VELCOM programme and encouraged all Dioceses and local congregations to work out together the mission purpose of the Church in each local context.

Through VELCOM congregations now set the agenda for mission action. Every month the local congregations engage in a learning process that involves the following :

Agape	— Fellowship building through shared meal.
Agenda Setting	— Identifying issues of concern affecting people within the local community.
Analysis	— Of the people's situation, needs and feelings and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel and the concerns of the community.
Action	— Risking solidarity. Mission actions.

The whole process is undergirded by Bible study materials written in response to the mission issues identified by the local congregation.

Other aspects of the VELCOM process include focusing on the role of liturgical renewal as a resource for mission action and Diaconal training in which lay persons become resource persons who can work alongside the Pastors in equipping the local congregation.

Diocesan VELCOM News—Highlights

Kerala

The primary concern is on the need for renewal in leadership. The dominant model of authoritarian leadership needs to be replaced with co-operative enabling leadership.

A rise in fundamentalism has led to increased attention being given to Bible study and family counselling.

Increased attention on youth. Churches are encouraged to advertise job opportunities for young people and to use young people more in their mission thrust.

South Karnataka

1. Primary focus is on training to overcome maintenance and Pastor-centered congregations. Attention is being given to youth and women leadership development.
2. Need for Sunday school curriculum to be revised as a result of issues raised in recent evaluation.
3. Review of ministerial training being carried out by Karnatic Theological College.
4. New set of Bible studies for local congregations being produced to help create new theological and missiological orientation at congregational levels.
5. Focus on youth and women programmes change from being narrow Church-based to involvement in the community. People are being empowered to ask serious political questions.
6. Churches experiencing greater ecumenical co-operation. Churches worked as peace makers between rural religious groups. Churches became sanctuary for many people who feared for their lives.
7. Development of healing ministries.
8. Greater co-operation between rural and urban congregations.

Northern Karnataka

1. New mission outreach to temple girls.
2. New venture in health care with Pastor and doctor now making joint visit to people in local communities.
3. Diaconal training has empowered lay leaders. They no more sit and wait on Pastors to solve their problems.
4. Through the work of Christian journalists, an investigative team formed to expose corruption in public offices.
5. In coastal Andhra Pradesh over 1,000 village congregations are affected by cyclones. New awareness has led to ways in which they can meet their own needs. They have engaged in fasting and praying and raising funds to help the poorest in the community.
6. They have built sanitary facilities especially for women folks and have increased their giving to the ministry by 3-15%.

East Kerala

1. Main focus is on outreach to the 26 tribal groups. Through twinning congregations are encouraged to enter into mission partnership with tribal groups.
2. Other areas of emphasis include health care and Bible study.

Madras

1. Rural health guides trained to increase health awareness in rural areas.
2. Youth Department focussing on helping dropouts with extra school education.

Medek

1. Priority on training of Church workers.
2. Church acted as peacemaker in communal riot areas.
3. Development of prayer groups and Bible study materials.
4. Increased ecumenical youth action.
5. Self-employment training programme for unemployed.
6. Training in social analysis.
7. New emphasis on communicating the gospel through cultural forms.
8. VELCOM has led to development of self-affirmation/ self-assertion of 'outcast' people who never used to walk near to Brahmin class. Outcast community challenged the status quo which led to some being arrested. They won the case and now see themselves from being 'no people' to 'God's people'.
9. Ecological evangelism : congregations now taking lead in encouraging community to care for environment. Tree planting programme has been developed.

How can the VELCOM Programme be Further Strengthened?

Plan of Action

1. All Diocesan VELCOM co-ordinators to meet more often for strategic planning.

(*Contd. on p.* 17)

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

St. Andrews and St. Mary's Churches—Machilipatinam

The bi-platinum and the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of CSI St. Mary's Church and CSI St. Andrew's Churches, Machilipatinam respectively have been held from January 6th through 10th, 1992 at the premises of St. Andrews Church, Machilipatinam.

The occasion was the commemoration of the 150 years of the dedication of St. Mary's Church Machilipatinam which is considered to be the oldest existing churches in the local area between Calcutta and Madras on the East Coast.

This Church of St. Marys which was once known as Arabelas Church was dedicated on 10th of January 1842 by the then Bishop of the Diocese of Madras, Rt. Rev. George Treverun. On the previous day i.e. 9th of January 1842 Rev. Henry W. Fox, one of the first missionaries of the CMS to the Telugu land was ordained to priesthood.

It was also the occasion of the Platinum jubilee of St. Andrews Church Machilipatinam which was dedicated on 24th February 1917. As such a combined celebration was slated for January 6th to 10th 1992. The inauguration of the jubilee was done by the Most Rev. Dr. P. Victor Premasagar, Moderator of the CSI at a special service arranged on Epiphany Day (6th January, 1992) at 10.00 a.m. at St. Andrews Church Machilipatinam.

Even though the inauguration day fell on the working day very many communicant members attended the Service at which the Moderator delivered a challenging message. While calling the congregations to remember the great things worked out for our Lord by men of faith in the past generations, he reminded the present generation of the challenge before in living for Jesus Christ, in bringing peace and tranquility to the country for which we are sent as ambassadors, pleading the cause of the down-trodden and the needy and paying a way for a joint society.

About 30 clergy from the diocese of Krishna-Godavari and the neighbouring diocese of Dornakal participated in the thanksgiving service at which the Rt. Rev. T.B.D. Prakasa Rao, Bishop of Krishna Godavari and Chairman of the Jubilee committee and Rt. Rev. N.D.A. Samuel, former Moderator of the CSI and former bishop of the Krishna Godavari diocese were joint celebrants. There was a common lunch arranged for all the visitors at the Church premises at 1.00 p.m. on 6th.

There was a public meeting in the evening at 6.30 p.m. which was presided over by Rt. Rev. T.B.D. Prakasa Rao. Most Rev. Dr. P. Victor Premasagar was the chief guest and other guests were Rt. Rev. Dr. N.D.A. Samuel Prof. George Koshy, General Secretary, CSI Synod and members of the visiting team consisting of 6 members of the diocese of Oberhassen in Germany led by Rev. Birgit Easenbach .

The highlight of the programme was the releasing of a Souvenir depicting the church's life in Machilipatinam in the past 150 years. The Souvenir was released by Prof. George Koshy General Secretary of the CSI. This was followed by the honouring of about 25 elders from the congregations who were past 75 years by the guests of honour. Further in the evening a cultural dance drama 'Balidanam' was presented by Suvartha Vani in Vijayawada in a superb manner and was appreciated by everyone. The evening function was attended by over 4,000 people. The next day i.e., 7th January 1992 a special Confirmation service was held commemorating the jubilee at which 39 youth were confirmed by the Bishop of the Diocese at St. Andrews Church. From 7th through 9th there was arranged a Special Bible study class every evening at 6.30 p.m. at which the Rt. Rev. Dr. N.D.A. Samuel was the leader. He conducted 3 Bible Studies which took the congregations to deeper levels of faith and call to be real witnesses for Jesus our master in this world. A special team led by Mr. K. Gnavartham went to a village called Kanooru as part of the outreach ministry mooted out for the Jubilee celebrations.

The climax of the celebrations was the Dedication service held at 5.30 p.m. at St. Marys church, Machilipatinam at which Rt. Rev. Dr. N.D.A. Samuel was the preacher. Its theme was the continuing vision of the churches. The same was attended by more than 500 people and St. Marys could not accommodate all. Many had to stand outside and the church was overflowing to its capacity. A special service was prepared by Rev. Joel, Chaplain of the Church, with the assistance from Rev. Lambert Jasper of UTC Bangalore. Special jubilee songs were written by the late Rev. H.W. Fox for the occasion of the CMS Jubilee in 1848.

'I hear ten thousand voices singing' and the one written by Mrs. Manjula Joel for the 150th year jubilee celebrations were sung by the congregations with joy and thanksgiving.

The local committee further decided to declare this year as the Jubilee year and contemplates to plan many more great things for Christ and His Church.

REV. CH. JOEL ALFRED SAMUEL

TIRUNELVELI DIOCESE

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. M. S. JESUDASON

In the passing away of Rev. M. S. JESUDASON on 22-1-1992, Tirunelveli Diocese has lost one of its well-beloved presbyters, who both while in service and after retirement made a silent and solid contribution to the growth of the Diocese in several different areas and for the extension of God's kingdom on earth.

Entering ministry in the Diocese in 1950, he served in parishes at several outstations like Vagaikulam, Nazareth, Kadayanoaai, Christinagaram and Mengnanapuram and endeared himself to the congregations by his saintly simplicity, unwearied helpfulness and zeal in particular for catching the children and youth for Christ. The Diocese made very good use of his aptitude for work among the youth by lending his services to 'Youth for Christ' Movement. Along with Rev. Walter Veith from Australia, he did a splendid job for 6 years among students in the numerous Diocesan High Schools. He was placed in charge of the Follow Up Work after Dr. Billy Graham's Crusade in the Diocese in 1956. The thoroughgoing manner in which he discharged that ministry earned for him the appreciation of Dr. Billy Graham, who invited him to the Amsterdam Conference.

All through his ministry Rev. M. S. Jesudason used his proficiency in Carnatic Music in the service of the Church. He used to conduct Summer Schools of Music and train hundreds of young Pastors, Church Workers and youth interested in music. He participated in a Conference on Church Music held at Hong Kong and impressed the vast gathering by his graceful rendering of Tamil lyrics set to Carnatic music. His music score for the C.S.I. Order of the Holy Communion Service used all over the Tirunelveli Diocese and in many other Tamil Dioceses has been widely acclaimed as the best available so far.

In the long gap between the retirement of Bishop Jebaraj and the Consecration of Bishop Garrett (18 months), he was the Moderator's Commissary in the Diocese. Never enamoured of any office or power, he rose to the occasion and discharged the functions of that high office with remarkable ability and grace.

During the last 2 years of his active service, he was placed in charge of the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Palayamkottai, where again he established intimate Christian fellowship with each and every family. His sermons were simple, clear and forthright, and came out of his personal encounters with his Lord and Master. In one memorable sermon he declared : 'In all my life I have never had an enemy !' How would everyone wish that he or she could say that !

We thank God for the life and ministry of this valued servant of God. May his tribe increase !

D. S. GEORGE MULLER

Contd. from p. 15

2. VELCOM thrust should give greater priority to youth and women leadership development.

3. All Diocesan departments should become more involved in the VELCOM process.

4. VELCOM materials should be supplied for wider distribution.

5. VELCOM programme should invest in more modern communication equipment.

6. Diocesan writers group should be established to produce effective Bible study materials.

7. VELCOM equipping process should be introduced to more Church workers.

8. More emphasis to be placed on celebratory aspect of VELCOM experience.

9. Increase the involvement of young people and women in the shaping of the VELCOM programme.

— REV. RODERICK HEWITT
Secretary—CWM, London

— REV. DASS BABU
Director—VELCOM

Statement about ownership and other particulars about the newspaper 'The South India Churchman'

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I, George Koshy, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd.)

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Communicators Meet on Global Communication and Justice

Journalists and experts in the fields of sociology, religion and education attended a 8-day consultation in Quezon City on Global Communication and Justice recently (Jan. 8-Jan. 15).

The 25 participants came from 8 countries in Asia and North America.

They came to take a hard look at the issues of global communication and justice and to devise a plan of action to change communication policies in structures of government, development agencies and religious institutions.

As the world moves towards a global village there is growing concern over how the media is communicating to the people.

Along with the messages of buy and sell, we are hearing a message of domination from those controlling the media and the new communication technologies.

Communication is an essential instrument of modernity and industrial order but its relationship to most groups is one of domination.

North America is recognised as one of the cultural dominators.

It not only exports form and content but western economic-based theories of media regulation that serve the interests of the transnational corporations rather than those of the people—especially women, the dalits (outcastes) in India, the indigenous people in Asia as well as the marginalised groups in North America.

The participants had intense discussions with local grassroots organisers from the fishing and farm communities, labour movement and urban poor as well a visited the various communication agencies.

These visits, together with the research papers presente at the consultation, helped participants to see first-han how the communication process is being used and abuse

Technology can help in communication when it ha been tamed.

The participants called on communicators and educa tors in both North America and Asia to work togeth for a more just global communication environment.

The participants, who were also representatives fro various religious organisations in Asia and North Americ called the religious authorities to see the impact of com munication as an object of social action and reform an take the lead in promoting change and justice.

The participants also recommended that an Asia-Nort America forum be held in the next three years to condu studies, work on the building of a resource network an organise the exchange of resources.

The consultation was sponsored by Intermedia, As Region-World Association of Christian Communicatio (AR-WACC), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) co-operation with National Council of Churches of Chri (NCCC), USA, Asian Social Institute (ASI), People Communication (PIC) and National Council of Church Philippines (NCCP).

REV. DR. JAMES MASSEY
AR-WACC Chairperson

H. L. Financial Consultants and Management Services (S. India) Pvt. Ltd.

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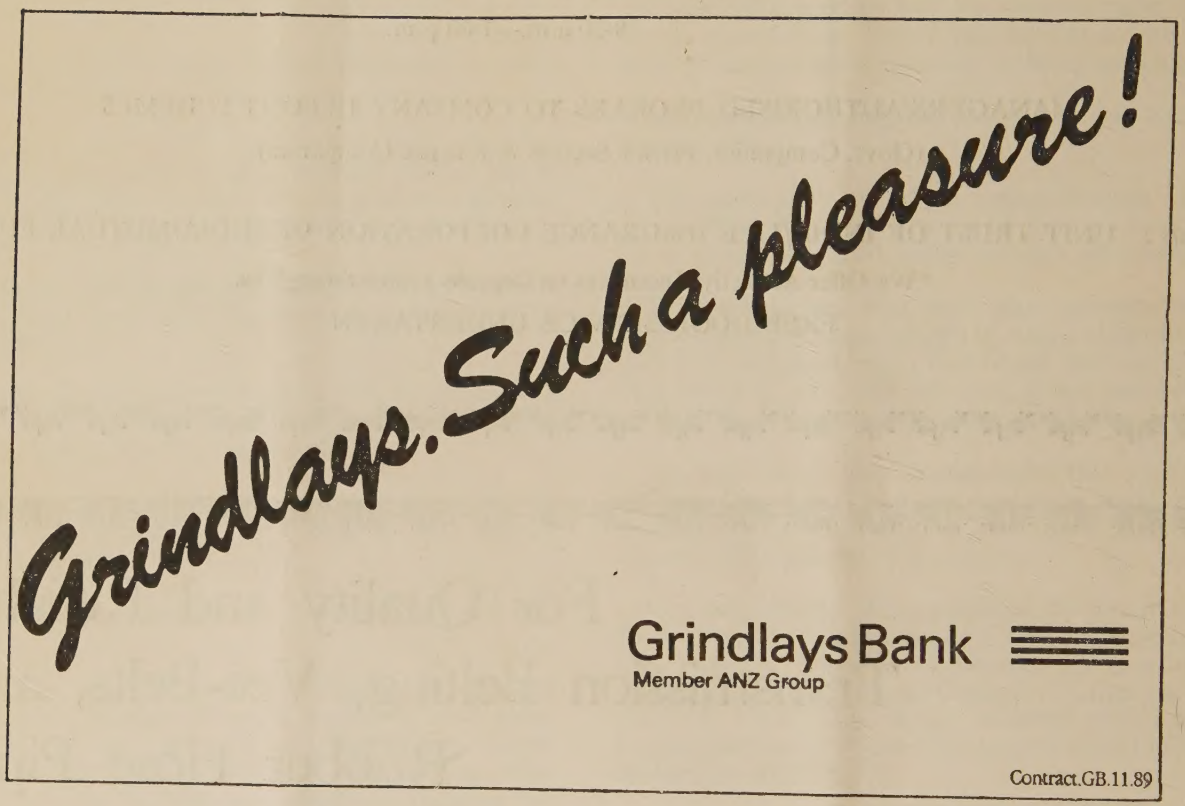
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